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ON THE COVER:

Let's Tree Wilmot has brought together volunteers and community organizations with one simple goal: to grow a healthier, greener Wilmot for generations to come

LOCAL & REPUTABLE
BUSINESS DIRECTORY LISTING
PAGE 26

COMMUNITY RESOURCE GUIDE

Empowering older adults to embrace their limitless potential

VOL. 9 ISSUE 2 | OCTOBER 2026



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Tara Held
EDITOR/PUBLISHER

Rich Held
DISTRIBUTION

Victoria Zinger
DESIGNER

Dr. Nicole Didyk
Community Care Concepts
Woolwich Community Health Centre
Alzheimer Society Waterloo Wellington
Elaine Birch
Fred Parry
Anne Milne
Scott Dunstall
Schlegel-UW Research Institute for Aging (RIA)
CONTRIBUTORS

On The Cover

Let's Tree Wilmot: Since its beginning in 2020, the group has brought together volunteers and community organizations with one simple goal: to grow a healthier, greener Wilmot for generations to come. See the full cover story on page 12.

Cover story and photo by:
Elaine Birch



Embracing Change

147 Arnold St.
New Hamburg, ON N3A 2C6

519-574-6428

embracingchangeinfo@gmail.com

www.embracingchange.ca

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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Counting our Blessings

There's something about October that always makes me want to slow down a little. The cooler mornings, the changing leaves and Thanksgiving around the corner seem to remind us to appreciate the simple things in life.

Thanksgiving is a wonderful opportunity to spend time with the people we care about, but it's also a good reminder that gratitude doesn't have to be saved for one day. Maybe you're thankful for your family, a good friend, a neighbour who checks in on you, or even those little everyday moments that make you smile. Sometimes, it's the simple things we can easily overlook that we appreciate the most.

For me, I have a little extra to be thankful for this year. My son got married last month, and it was such a special time for our family. Watching your children grow up, find someone to share their life with and start a new chapter is one of those moments that makes you stop and appreciate just how quickly the years go by. It was a beautiful day filled with family, friends, laughter and lots of memories that I know we'll treasure for years to come. It reminded me once again that these are the moments that really matter.

October is also Fire Prevention Month, with Fire Prevention Week taking place October 4–10, 2026. This year's theme is "Charge Into Fire Safety™. Safe Charging Is a Superpower."

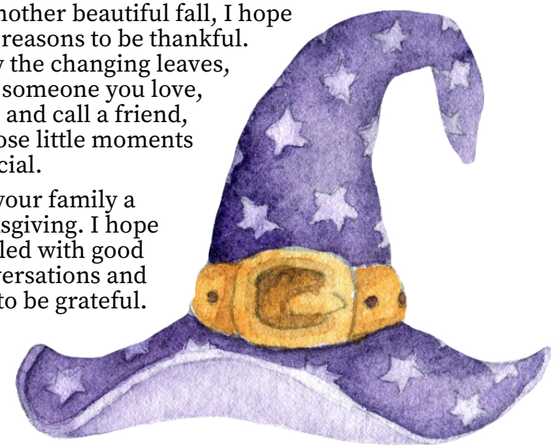
With so many rechargeable devices in our homes—from phones and tablets to mobility devices, power tools and more—it's worth taking a few minutes to think about how we charge them. Use the charger made for your device, avoid charging on soft surfaces such as beds and couches, and never use a battery or charger that is damaged, swollen or unusually hot.

We've included more information about lithium-ion battery safety on page 24, so be sure to have a look. And while you're thinking about fire safety, it's a great time to check your smoke and carbon monoxide alarms and make sure everything is working as it should.

As we head into another beautiful fall, I hope you find plenty of reasons to be thankful. Take time to enjoy the changing leaves, share a meal with someone you love, pick up the phone and call a friend, and appreciate those little moments that make life special.

Wishing you and your family a very happy Thanksgiving. I hope your October is filled with good people, good conversations and plenty of reasons to be grateful.

Tara



















Step Into Autumn: Staying Active, Safe, and Protected This Season

There is a distinct magic to autumn. The mornings arrive with a brisk, crisp bite, the canopy overhead transforms into vivid shades of gold and amber, and the trails are blanketed in freshly fallen leaves. It is arguably the best time of year to head outside, breathe in the fresh air, and keep moving before winter sets in.

However, taking full advantage of the season requires taking care of your health from both angles: protecting your body internally against seasonal bugs and keeping yourself steady and safe on your feet outdoors.

Here is how you can make the most of autumn while prioritizing your wellness.

1. Build Your Internal Defense: Flu & COVID-19 Protection

As the weather cools, we naturally spend more time indoors with family, friends, and coworkers. This shift brings an increase in circulating seasonal respiratory viruses.

Taking an offensive approach to your health early in the season makes all the difference:

- **Stay Up to Date on Vaccines:** Updating your annual influenza and COVID-19 shots is the single most effective way to prevent serious illness and protect the vulnerable loved ones around you.
- **Convenience in One Visit:** In most cases, you can receive your flu shot and updated COVID-19 booster at the exact same appointment—saving you time and getting you protected ahead of the busy holiday season. (subject to availability)
- **Support Your Daily Habits:** Pair your immunizations with good foundational habits. Stay hydrated, prioritize regular sleep, and speak with your pharmacist about whether daily Vitamin D supplementation is right for you as daylight hours grow shorter.

2. Tread Confidently: Outdoor Mobility and Balance

While autumn walks are scenic, trail conditions can change quickly. Crisp morning frosts, damp soil, and layers of fallen leaves often hide uneven roots, loose rocks, and slippery patches. A sudden slip can quickly turn a refreshing walk into a sprain or fall.

To help keep you moving safely and confidently, we are excited to introduce our **lineup of hiking sticks and walking poles**, now available in-store.

Why consider walking sticks for your outdoor strolls?

- Enhanced Stability & Balance: Having extra points of contact with the ground significantly reduces the risk of slips on damp, slick leaf-covered paths.
- Joint Relief: Using walking sticks transfers weight away from your lower back, hips, and knees—making inclines, descents, and uneven paths much gentler on your joints.
- Confidence at Any Pace: You don't have to be scaling a mountain to benefit from hiking poles. Whether you're navigating local forest trails, walking gravel country roads, or simply taking a stroll through a neighborhood park, they provide added stability, rhythm, and upright posture support.

3. Quick Checklist for Your Fall Outings

Before you head out to enjoy the foliage this week, keep these simple tips in mind:

1. Layer Up: Wear breathable layers that you can easily peel off as you warm up on your walk.
2. Watch Your Footing: Choose sturdy footwear with deep tread to handle wet leaves and mud.
3. Adjust Your Poles Or Grip: Ensure your adjustable hiking sticks are set so your elbow forms roughly a 90-degree angle when holding the grip. For fixed length poles ensure you purchase one of the appropriate height so you can comfortably grasp it with your elbow at a 90-degree angle.
4. Hydrate & Protect: The crisp air can be deceptively drying—bring water and protect exposed skin and lips from chilly breezes.

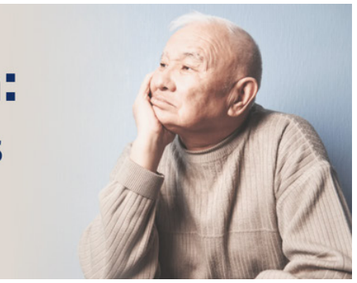
Visit Us in Store

Don't let seasonal bugs or tricky footing keep you from enjoying the best that fall has to offer. Staying active is the best medicine.

Stop by the pharmacy today to ask our team about booking your seasonal immunizations, check out our new walking sticks in person, and let us help you find the perfect fit for your autumn adventures. We are always here to keep our community active, healthy, and moving forward!

PHARMASAVE®

When the Day Winds Down:
Understanding Late-Day Restlessness in Dementia



For some people living with dementia, late afternoon or early evening can bring increased restlessness, anxiety or confusion. They may pace, wander, become frustrated or have difficulty communicating. For care partners, these changes can be challenging and difficult to understand.

Sometimes called "sundowning," late-day confusion or restlessness is common among people living with dementia. It may be related to tiredness, changes in the brain's sleep-wake cycle, reduced lighting and shadows, or simply becoming overwhelmed after a long day.

Why does it happen?

There is no single cause of late-day restlessness. A person may be tired or overwhelmed after a full day, while changes to the brain's sleep-wake cycle can make it harder to tell day from night. As daylight fades, shadows and lower lighting may also increase confusion or anxiety.

Understanding these possible triggers can help care partners respond with patience and compassion. Restlessness is not intentional - it may be the person's way of communicating that something feels confusing, uncomfortable or overwhelming.

Small changes can make a difference

Every person is different, so finding what works may take some trial and error. Consider keeping a simple record of when restlessness occurs and what happened beforehand. Patterns may emerge that can help you plan ahead.

Some strategies to try include:

- Keep the afternoon active. Encourage meaningful activities and physical activity earlier in the day, while avoiding overstimulation later on.
- Create a calming evening routine. If agitation usually occurs at a particular time, plan a familiar, relaxing activity around then.
- Light the room. Turn on lamps before it gets dark and close curtains to reduce shadows.
- Offer comfort and reassurance. A favourite blanket, familiar music, photographs or reminiscing about positive memories may help redirect attention.
- Keep naps short. Too much daytime sleep can interfere with nighttime sleep.
- Give a sense of purpose. Simple activities such as setting the table, folding laundry or arranging flowers can provide meaningful engagement.
- Consider timing. If visits or more demanding activities regularly lead to distress later in the day, a morning visit may be a better option.

Most importantly, remember that there is no one-size-fits-all solution. What works one day may not work the next. If late-day restlessness is new, becomes significantly worse, or is accompanied by other concerning changes, speak with a healthcare professional.

And remember, you do not have to navigate dementia alone. The Alzheimer Society Waterloo Wellington is here to provide information, guidance and support to people living with dementia and the people who care for them – contact us at asww@alzheimerww.ca or (519) 742-1422, or visit AlzheimerWW.ca.

Société Alzheimer Society
WATERLOO WELLINGTON
Your partner in dementia care.

Are You Suddenly Seeing Dark Spots? Here's What You Should Do!

It isn't a couple of insects following you around. The black spots, squiggly lines and drifting cobweb shapes are called floaters.

Thankfully, the sudden appearance of these moving specks in your vision are usually a sign of a normal, harmless, change within the eye. However, new floaters, especially if there are a great number or if they are large in size, could indicate a more serious problem.

What Are Floaters?

The dark spots that you are seeing are caused by a shadow cast onto your retina, which is located inside your eye at the back wall. Over time, proteins in the gel-like fluid that fills the eye, called the vitreous, begin to clump together and move around. These solid proteins block incoming light from reaching the retina, projecting the appearance of a floater in your vision.

What Causes Floaters?

- The primary cause of floaters in your vision is simply the normal aging process of the vitreous.

However, other conditions can cause an increase in floaters, including:

- Eye injuries
- Posterior vitreous detachment (PVD)
- Eye infections and inflammation
- Bleeding within the eye
- Retinal tears
- Retinal detachment

Are Floaters Normal?

Seeing the occasional floater is normal and nothing more than an annoyance.

But a sudden increase in floaters can indicate a more serious condition that requires immediate attention such as those listed above. Floaters that are accompanied by the appearance of flashes of light also warrant an urgent phone call to your eye doctor because that could indicate a torn or detached retina which could lead to permanent vision loss, unless treated quickly.

With the dilation of your pupils and a through assessment of your retina, your optometrist can evaluate the cause of your floaters and recommend a treatment plan for you if necessary.

FAQ

Can eye floaters cause blindness?

Eye floaters themselves cannot cause a person to go blind. However, floaters can signal an underlying sight-threatening condition that can lead to partial vision loss or blindness unless treated promptly. Always discuss any changes in your vision with your local optometrist during your comprehensive eye exam to rule out potentially harmful changes within your eyes.

Will eye floaters go away on their own?

In most cases of mild to moderate floaters, no treatment is needed at all. If nothing serious is causing your floaters, your brain will usually adjust and learn to ignore them. Persistent floaters should be addressed as soon as possible by your optometrist.

Howard Dolman BSc OD
Dolman Eyecare Centre
With thanks to EyeCarePro



WCHC COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTRE

SERVING WOOLWICH WELLESLEY & WILMOT

Patient or not, all are welcome to attend our workshops & programs!



Managing Stress with a Rare or Chronic Disease

This workshop is designed for people living with chronic or rare diseases. Living with an illness can bring added stress. Understanding how stress affects you and learning ways to manage it are important steps to building health literacy. In this workshop, you will learn what stress is and what it feels like, explore how stress is related to chronic or rare diseases, and learn strategies for coping with stress.

Monday, October 5, 2026 | In person or Zoom
2:00 - 3:30 PM | 10 Parkside Drive, St. Jacobs

Stay Connected: Practical Tips for Better Hearing

Join us for a workshop on hearing health and its impact on your safety, brain health, and well-being. We'll cover what to expect during a hearing test, practical ways to protect your hearing, the latest advances in hearing aid technology, and simple communication strategies to support conversations with people experiencing hearing loss.

Tuesday, October 6, 2026
1:30 - 3:00 PM
10 Parkside Drive, St. Jacobs or Zoom

Accepting New Patient Applications!

We are now accepting new patients! If you are looking for a healthcare provider, please visit our website to fill in the registration, or email us at intake@wchc.on.ca

Helping Loves Ones with Addiction

This 8-week group helps loved ones of people struggling with substance use build skills to support positive change while caring for their own well-being. This group is for adults 18+ who are family or significant others of people who are struggling with their own substance use.
September 3rd, 2026

Mondays, September 14 - November 9, 2026
6:30 - 7:30 PM
In person
10 Parkside Drive, St. Jacobs

Smoking & Vaping Cessation

This 8-week group will help you build the skills, learn the strategies and gain the confidence to reduce or stop your smoking or vaping. This group is for adults 18+ who are motivated to change their smoking or vaping or those who have already stopped and want more support.

Mondays, September 14 - November 9, 2026
5:00 - 6:00 PM
In person | 10 Parkside Drive, St. Jacobs

If you would like to register, please visit our website at www.WCHC.on.ca, or email Tariq at tabdulhadi@wchc.on.ca, or call at 519-664-3794 ext. 222

REGISTER

Ontario Health atHome

Health Care Connect

Need a family doctor or nurse practitioner?

Your new family health care provider might be just a phone call away. Our team of Care Coordinators identifies doctors and nurse practitioners in your community who are accepting patients and links them with people who are looking for a health care provider.

To begin, all you have to do is register at 1-800-445-1822 or at www.ontario.ca/healthcareconnect

You will be asked to answer a few basic questions about your health care needs. You will then be connected to a doctor or nurse practitioner at the earliest opportunity.

Who Can Use the Program?

To use Health CareConnect, you must:

- Have a valid Ontario health card
- Have an up- to-date mailing address associated with your health card

Contact Information

If you have any questions regarding this service please contact:
310-2222 • ontariohealthathome.ca



12-2025

Ontario Health atHome | 310-2222 | ontariohealthathome.ca

Authorized by the Natasha Salonen Re-election Campaign

Together,

building a future that still feels like home.



Over the past four years, I have worked to put Wilmot on a stronger financial footing, protect the services and infrastructure we rely on, and plan carefully for what comes next. I want to continue that work while preserving the character and connections that make Wilmot feel like home.

RE-ELECT

Natasha Salonen

FOR MAYOR

RESPONSIBLE FINANCES

I led Wilmot's move to zero-based budgeting and ended the practice of using reserves to fund ongoing operating costs, creating a more stable financial foundation.

WILMOT, HOME FOR LIFE

This term, council approvals helped enable Nithview's expansion to 384 long-term-care beds. I am working with developers to bring barrier-free homes to future neighbourhoods.

PLANNING WHAT'S NEXT

Maintaining and renewing infrastructure, planning carefully for change while protecting Wilmot's character, building community partnerships and advocating for Wilmot.

Learn more about the past four years, what comes next, and the work I hope to continue for Wilmot.

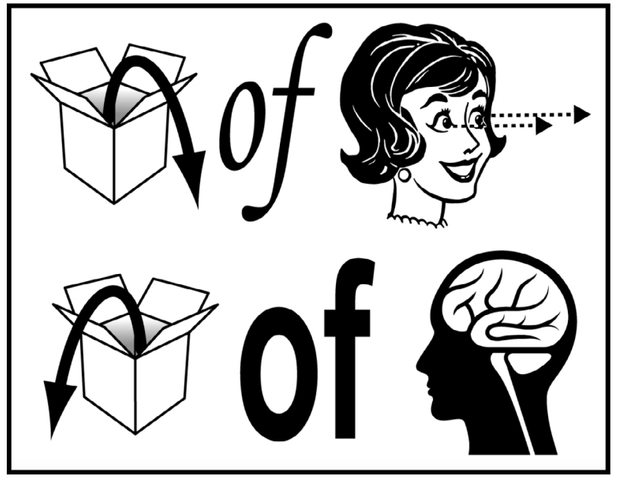
natashasalonen.com/election

Online voting starts
October 16, 2026

Election day is
October 26, 2026

October Puzzles

Concentration Puzzle



Sudoku

					2		3	8
		4	8		1	2		
	1			6		9	5	
6	5		9			7		
	3			7			1	
		7			6		9	2
	2	3		4			6	
		6	1		5	3		
9	4		6					





SPOT THE DIFFERENCE

Solutions on page 30

COVER STORY



Let's Tree Wilmot: Growing a Greener Wilmot

WRITTEN BY: ELAINE BIRCH

"Old men will plant a tree that they know they will never sit under its shade."

It's an old Chinese proverb that resonates deeply with Marlene Knezevich, chair of *Let's Tree Wilmot.*

"It's about believing in the future," she says. "It's what we are doing for our grandkids."

That belief is at the heart of *Let's Tree Wilmot,* a project of Garden Wilmot under the Wilmot Horticultural Society. Since its beginning in 2020, the group has brought together volunteers and community organizations with one simple goal: to grow a healthier, greener Wilmot for generations to come.

Marlene Knezevich, love of nature & passion for the future

At the center of the project is Marlene, whose connection to nature began long before she ever planted a tree as a volunteer.

Marlene grew up on a tobacco farm just outside Innerkip, the oldest of seven children. The family home was close to the Thames River, with swamp and hardwood bush nearby.

"For me, to get away from the chaos, I would wonder through the bush," she recalls. "I have always had a love of nature."

Later, Marlene earned a degree in kinesiology and spent 30 years living in Mississauga before retiring and moving to New Hamburg. She joined the Wilmot Agricultural Society, became involved in caring for township gardens and joined the Nith Valley Eco Boosters.

An Idea Takes Root

The idea of *Let's Tree Wilmot* grew from those connections.

An Eco Boosters member had participated in a tree-planting project in Woolwich Township. "You know, we should get into tree-planting," she suggested.

Marlene brought the idea to Garden Wilmot. Four Eco Boosters members wanted to make it happen, and partnerships began forming.

"Collaboration is big for us," Marlene says.

Wilmot Rotary became an early partner, and Garden Wilmot provided the insurance and charitable status needed to move the project forward. The groups reached out to Wilmot's service organizations, seeking both financial support and volunteers.

The first meeting was scheduled for March 11, 2020.

"That evening, the World Health Organization declared the pandemic," Marlene recalls.

The project had to wait.

Planting the First 100 Trees

Dean Peachy, who lives in the Morningside Community, became instrumental in getting the project's first funding and now oversees the planting projects and funding.

During COVID, the federal government provided seniors with a one-time payment of approximately $300. With restaurants, businesses and many activities shut down, Dan suggested through the Morningside newsletter that anyone who did not need the money could donate it to one of two local causes: the Wilmot Resource Centre or *Let's Tree Wilmot.*

The response helped give the fledging project its start. Wilmot Rotary contributed $1000, and Wilmot Horticultural Society contributed another $1000.

On October 24, 2020, Let's Tree Wilmot held its first planting.

The township provided 50 trees, while Let's Tree Wilmot purchased another 50. In total, 100 trees went into the ground that day, with 50 masked volunteers turning out during the pandemic to make it happen. To date, *Let's Tree Wilmot* has now planted over 6,625 trees!

"The best time to plant a tree was 30 years ago," Marlene says, "But another best time is now."

A Tree For Everybody: goal is to match the number of trees planted to townships population by 2030

Since that first planting, the project has grown substantially. *Let's Tree Wilmot* has planted trees, primarily on public lands, and volunteers continue to monitor the trees, documenting their size, health and survival rates.

They protect young trees from deer and other damage, and a volunteer arborist helps with pruning.

Now the organization is looking beyond public property with its *Tree for Everybody* initiative, encouraging residents to plant trees on their own land.

The goal is to create "homegrown forests"—one property, one yard and one tree at a time.

For more information check out:
www.letstreewilmot.ca

Meet Billy

Planting thousands of trees is one thing. Keeping them alive is another.

That's where Billy comes in.

Billy is an old Dodge Ram truck that has been outfitted by a volunteer with a 1,000-litre water tank and pump. The truck has become an essential part of *Let's Tree Wilmot's* operation.

Because the township does not have the capacity to water all the newly planted trees, volunteers step in. For two years after planting, the trees are watered every two weeks.

It's a commitment that demonstrates that planting a tree is only the beginning. Volunteers return, monitor, water, protect and care for the trees until they have a better chance of standing on their own.

There's a Place for Everyone

You don't need to be an arborist—or even know the difference between a maple and an oak—to volunteer.

"None of us in this organization have tree backgrounds," Marlene says.

What volunteers do have is an interest in making their community better.

"You have to look for it; it won't come to you," Marlene advises for those retirees thinking of volunteering somewhere.

Under *Let's Tree Wilmot*, there are opportunities for everyone: administration, bookkeeping, social media, website work, refreshments at events and planting guardians who live near newly planted trees and keep an eye on them.

Marlene says volunteering has been incredibly fulfilling.

For one volunteer in the group, he says being a water warrior has given him "purpose and self-worth."



"People usually think of the physical: you're planting a tree," Marlene says. "But there is so much more. We have so many great volunteers—we have a good team."

And perhaps that is the greatest lesson *Let's Tree Wilmot* offers: when a community puts down roots together, it creates something that can outlive all of us.



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1-855-664-1900
info@communitycareconcepts.ca
www.communitycareconcepts.ca

23 Church St.
New Hamburg
519-662-9526

Celebrating Community Support Services

October marks Community Support Month across the province of Ontario. Across Ontario, more than one million people benefit from home and community support services that support seniors and adults with disabilities to live in their own homes with dignity and independence. Home and community support services include a broad range of programs, including programs that help individuals to remain connected to their community, services that help individuals navigate the health and social services system and services that support individuals and caregivers. By customizing services to individuals' needs and supporting immediate needs, services often help to prevent or delay further challenges while supporting caregivers and helping other parts of our health system.

For the past 41 years, Community Care Concepts has provided home and community support services across Woolwich, Wellesley and Wilmot to more than 5,000 individuals and caregivers each year including:

Programs that help individuals connect with others in a variety of community locations - Community Dining, free gentle exercise classes and a variety of social and recreational programs.

Services that help individuals to live independently - Meals on Wheels; transportation to medical and other appointments; in-home practical support; home help with groceries, light housekeeping, meal preparation and outdoor maintenance; friendly visiting; and adult day programs.

Support as individuals transition from hospital to home - Transportation support, settling in services and complimentary home support services for up to six weeks (based upon eligibility).

Support for caregivers – Respite offered through adult day programs, practical support, in-home assistance, peer support programs, educational opportunities and access to specialized supports.

Opportunities to give back to your local community - A variety of volunteer opportunities such as delivering Meals on Wheels; driving individuals to medical appointments; preparing and serving meals in our dining programs; visiting isolated seniors; and, help with programming in our many group programs.

We could not do the work that we do without our many volunteers who give generously of their time and talents and the many members of our communities that contribute financially to our services. Pictured below are members of Stonecroft community in New Hamburg who generously contributed proceeds from their annual golf tournament to support Community Care Concepts' work in Wilmot Township.

We are grateful for the ongoing support of our communities. Working together we have been able to support many members of our community to live independently in their own homes. For more information on services or volunteer opportunities, call **519-664-1900, 519-662-9526 or 1-855-664-1900.**



COMMUNITY CARE CONCEPTS
of Woolwich, Wellesley and Wilmot

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Denise Pelley: A Snapshot of Her Life, Today

Putting down my pen, I realized that I have been in the presence of music royalty... as confirmed by Denise Pelley's induction into the 2015 Jack Richardson Music Awards – plus winning 'jazz vocalist of the year' multiple times.

Denise also enjoys singing in various genres including Gospel, R&B, Soul, etc. – an expansion of which she feels the "Jazz" community should adopt to survive.

Plus, other 'Hall of Fame" musicians such as the Lombardo brothers and their 'Royal Canadians' – their big band' welcoming millions on TV ring /sing in the New Year's celebration.

Yes, there seemed to be a buzz in the air as the mostly Portuguese bakery staff prepared a special place of my choosing... sensing someone important was coming. And, right on que, London's "Queen of Soul" arrived. From the moment staff removed the reserve sign, they couldn't do enough to be of service. I knew how they felt.

Maybe they were vicariously joining in my excitement. With Denise graciously agreeing to be interviewed, only I knew the real reason for her visit: the lady had something to say... be grateful.

– Vocals by Denise Pelley

A giving person, yet not immune from tragedy, she's lost a son due to a traffic accident. He was killed as a passenger in a car crash. Just in his twenties, he was pursuing a promising acting career.

Yet, a friend living years beyond her doctor's cancer expectation, just returned from another trip abroad, decades after her original prognosis.

"Our work and our lives become more meaningful when they are in harmony with who we are. The times when we feel the most happy, the most passionate, the most energized are the times we are most alive. And, that's when the soul sings." – by Denise Pelley

To better help me understand her take on life, I quoted Charlie Parker, and asked what it might mean. *"If you don't live it, it won't come out your horn."*

She felt it had to do with the importance of meaning in our lives. I agree.

I mean how can you help others when you've never truly shared grief... forgiveness even... just being there when someone's pouring out their heart.

Denise has worked with the best and finds that for arrangers, composers and musicians, it's their healing touch to be able to emote sounds with certain variations to the chords – be it joyous or sad – that comes from you.

"Your music can never be more or less than you are as a human being." – by Quincy Jones

Asked how she would like to be remembered, she thoughtfully said, *"Someone who was giving and shared her love of music and hopefully an inspirational life.*

Finally, she said that her years of visiting – approximating 300 to 400 young African children was a humbling experience. Every year they waited for her arrival ... with more singing and gratitude. As Denise reminds us, "...that's when our soul sings!"

– Vocals by Denise Pelley

That's the way I figure it. - Fred Parry

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Advance & Comfort Care Planning for Seniors

Holding Space for Regret, Relief and Everything in Between

Written by Sue Phillips, Serious Illness/End of Life Doula

"When we plan for our senior years & end-of-life journey, we reclaim choice, ease fear, and honour what matters most."



Dear Readers: October 2026

When my mother died in 2024, I truly understood the words "suddenly, at the age of 86."

Before I began working in this field, I sometimes wondered whether suddenly was the right word when someone had lived a long life. Surely, at 86, death could not be entirely unexpected.

Then it happened to my mother, and I understood.

Suddenly, I had only days—or even minutes—to make sense of feelings I didn't expect, wasn't prepared for, or perhaps had resisted thinking about.

You may have been your loved one's primary caregiver and be completely exhausted. You may feel ready to let go. There can be guilt about things said or left unsaid. There can be anger, relief and, of course, immense love.

Sometimes all these feelings exist at once.

Something I hope to offer the people I support is permission to accept all the feels without judgment and to be gentler with themselves.

My own experience with my mother's death has been complex, and I continue to explore the emotions surrounding our relationship.

Here is something I know for certain: when my mother moved into long-term care, I felt relief.

Following a health crisis, it became clear she would require PSW support at home. She made the difficult decision to move into long-term care. I'm guessing there was relief for my sister, who had supported Mom in her home for more than twenty years—but that is my sister's story to tell.

And when my mother died, I suddenly felt relief—again.

It can be difficult to say that out loud.

Yet perhaps the most unexpected gift came after her death.

I have a loving, beautiful relationship with my mother now—one that wasn't possible while she was alive.

As we gathered photographs and treasures for her Celebration of Life, I began looking at pictures of her—not simply as my mother, but as a woman.

I saw beautiful smiles I somehow hadn't noticed before. I saw a young woman whose life had been far from easy.

For perhaps the first time, I could look beyond all the roles she had carried. I could simply see her.

I had always known things about my mother's life. Intellectually, I understood some of what she had experienced. But knowing someone's story and emotionally understanding the person who lived it are very different things.

I wasn't able to fully embrace her until she was gone.

And I am okay with that.

I no longer regret that our relationship wasn't a fairy tale. Instead, I have come to recognize what my mother gave me, often without either of us realizing it.

Resilience. Strength. Humour (even the dark kind).

Those things are part of me because they were part of her.

Grief hasn't rewritten our relationship or erased what was difficult. It has allowed me to hold a fuller story—one that makes room for what hurt, what was missing, what was complicated, and what was given.

We don't always have to make the past better to make peace with it. Sometimes we simply begin to see it differently.

And suddenly, in the aftermath of her death, my mother became a gift to me and I to her.

Perhaps holding space is not about resolving what has been left unfinished but simply allowing each feeling to have its place.

Resource: Consider writing a letter to yourself or a loved one using these prompts:

- Thank you for...
- What I love/appreciate about you is...
- The ways you have enhanced my life include...
- I forgive you for...
- Please forgive me for...
- My hopes and dreams for you are...

Next month: Peer Grief Support: Extending the Circle of Care

Mental Health Matters at Every Age:

Recognizing the Signs This World Mental Health Day

RIA Schlegel-UW Research Institute for Aging
Enhancing Life

While conversations around mental health and wellness have grown significantly in recent years, older adults are often left out of the conversation. Generational stigma and the belief that profound sadness, hopelessness, loneliness, or fatigue are "a normal part of aging" often prevent people from seeking the support they need and deserve. Coexisting medical conditions can further complicate this, making mental health issues harder to detect, treat and manage.

This October 10, World Mental Health Day offers an opportunity to challenge those assumptions, raise awareness and break the silence. The reality is, depression is not a natural part of aging. Yet, according to the Canadian Coalition for Seniors Mental Health, up to 20 per cent of older adults experience symptoms of depression, with that number doubling for people in hospitals or long-term care (LTC) homes. As we age, several risk factors can impact our mental health, such as losing a loved one or friend, cognitive challenges, or a life-changing diagnosis.

Recognizing the Symptoms

We all have bad days and times when we feel down. But clinical depression is a serious, persistent condition where you may feel sad all the time and lack interest in activities that used to bring joy. Symptoms can range from mild to severe. For care partners, family members, and older adults, recognizing the signs is the first step in providing support.

Watch for these common symptoms:

- Significant sleep issues, such as sleeping too much or struggling with insomnia.
- Noticeable changes in eating habits, including a sudden loss of appetite or excessive eating.
- Lingering, intense feelings of guilt or worthlessness.
- Finding absolutely no joy in activities, hobbies, or routines you once loved.
- A noticeable decline in personal hygiene and daily self-care.
- Trouble concentrating, focusing, or finishing simple, everyday tasks.

Taking Action and Finding Support

Starting a conversation about mental health can feel scary, especially if you feel ashamed to open up or ask questions. Normalizing conversations around mental health will shift societal perceptions and reduce stigma, ensuring older adults feel more comfortable addressing their concerns without fear or judgment.

By checking in on our family, friends, and neighbours, we can reduce the social isolation and loneliness that can fuel depression and impact mental health. Check out the social isolation community conversation guide for helpful tips on supporting those around you.

For more detailed guidance, explore the Schlegel-UW Research Institute for Aging's (RIA) expert insights on demystifying depression in older adults.



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Choosing the right hearing care in Waterloo Region

Taking care of your hearing is about more than choosing a hearing aid. It's also about choosing hearing care that fits your needs, lifestyle and goals, with support you can count on along the way.

If you've noticed changes in your hearing, conversations can be a good place to start. Maybe you find yourself asking people to repeat themselves more often, turning up the television or having a harder time following conversations when there is background noise. A hearing assessment can help you better understand what you're experiencing and what your next steps could look like.

But hearing care is personal. There isn't one solution that's right for everyone.

Care built around your life

Your hearing needs are unique, and your care should reflect that. A hearing care professional can take the time to understand not only your hearing, but also the situations that matter most to you.

That might mean keeping up with conversations at family gatherings, enjoying a favourite television program, staying engaged in social activities or simply feeling more confident in everyday conversations.

If hearing aids are recommended, these everyday moments can help guide which technology and features may be right for you.

Technology that fits your needs

Today's hearing aids offer a range of technology designed to support hearing in different listening environments. Depending on the device, features may include rechargeable batteries, Bluetooth connectivity and technology designed to help manage background noise.

Having access to the latest technology is important, but so is finding a solution that works for your individual hearing needs and lifestyle. Personalized recommendations can help make that choice easier.

Support beyond your first appointment

Hearing care doesn't end when you receive hearing aids. Your hearing needs and listening experiences may change over time, and your devices may need adjustments as you become accustomed to wearing them.

Ongoing care gives you an opportunity to ask questions, make adjustments and continue getting the most from your hearing aids.

At HearingLife, personalized hearing care means having professionals who listen, access to the latest hearing technology and ongoing support throughout your hearing care journey. With more than 350 clinics across Canada, care is always close to home.

If better hearing is on your mind, a complimentary hearing test can be a simple place to start.

Visit **HearingLife.ca** or call **1-888-409-2536** to book your complimentary hearing test.

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HearingLife



Choosing the Right Shoes for Your Activity

Many of us were raised having one pair of shoes for all physical activity, footwear that was generally referred to as “sneakers” or “running shoes”.

But with the myriad types of physical activity that demand different types of movement, it’s actually quite important to ensure we wear the right footwear for the job in each instance.

Whether you’re playing an indoor sport, running a marathon, or hiking a winter trail, there’s footwear that is specifically designed for that type of activity. Here are some of the factors that will affect your choice of shoe or boot:

1. overall fit – regardless of the type of shoe, ensure footwear fits properly in terms of both width and length
2. flexibility – rigidity of the sole should vary based on the demands of your activity
3. weight – some shoes are made quite lightweight while others are composed of more and denser materials that make the shoe heavier
4. comfort – various activities allow for or require an ultra-comfortable shoe, usually accomplished using additional padding and/or support in particular places
5. traction – select sports and activities require a flat sole for ease of movement (and possibly even a bit of sliding), while others require a tread that digs into the terrain to minimize slippage
6. grip – this can be achieved by using specific materials for the outsole and/or by adding a series of “lugs” or teeth to the bottom of the shoe or boot
7. type/direction of movement – walking and running generally demand only constant forward motion, while some sports require movement in multiple directions and or regular starts and stops
8. breathability – prolonged, intense, and/or frequent activity benefits from shoes that are breathable, allowing shoes to dry out between uses and minimizing the risk for bacteria growth
9. water resistance – although water resistance typically means reduced breathability, if your activity exposes you to wet or snowy conditions, this type of protection can enhance comfort and extend the life of your footwear
10. sole profile – in some situations, you’ll benefit from a flat, sturdy sole, but in others (primary walking or running), a rocker sole enhances both comfort and performance. Be careful with the “maximal” design of some shoes, while “plush” these shoes can contribute to instability, fast compression, and injuries.
11. support – having adequate support is essential for most activities, but the amount and location of support in the shoe will vary depending on the activity’s dynamics
12. durability – durability is always a good thing, regardless of the type of footwear in question, but the build of the shoe as well as the nature, duration, and frequency of activity will have an impact on how long your footwear lasts

Specific Types of Footwear for Different Activities

Choosing the right shoes for your activity cycling bikingWhile this list is somewhat general and not exhaustive, the following are the main categories of activity-specific footwear.

Walking Shoes

Walking shoes are designed to support the natural rolling motion of your feet and ankles as you walk. They provide cushioning, flexibility, and comfort to help you move forward. While walking shoes are comfortable for walking, they are not recommended for running or other physical activities.

Running Shoes

Weight and fit are very important when choosing a running shoe. Running shoes are usually made with lightweight materials and are designed to be flexible. They are built to support movement in one direction: forward. This is also why running shoes can feel comfortable when walking.

However, we do not recommend wearing running shoes for gym workouts, aerobics, or court activities. These activities require more side-to-side support, which running shoes do not provide. Wearing running shoes for these activities may increase your risk of feeling unstable.

Cross-Training Shoes

Creating a strong, stable foundation for weight-lifting and other resistance work is paramount in a cross-training shoe. This generally means a sturdy, flat sole with a supportive upper, on either side of the heel. These shoes offer good durability for walking as well.

Court Shoes

Although court types can vary, a general indoor/outdoor hard court shoe will help ensure foot stability to counter frequent direction and velocity changes. A good thick, relatively flat sole is also typically a feature of court shoes.

Cleated Shoes

Field sports like football, baseball, soccer, and rugby are generally fast-paced and/or require bursts of activity that benefit from good traction. Cleats improve traction in all kinds of weather.

Hiking Shoes

Hikers encounter all types of terrain in all types of weather. Traction of the tread and stability of the upper is critical in hiking footwear. Consider a Gore-Tex boot or shoe for added weather resistance without compromising weight or breathability. Fun fact! You get what you pay for - Goretex application within footwear is not the same in all shoes, lower cost footwear tends to have less reliable application and will break down faster! Well applied Goretex will allow breathability, thus improving longevity. This usually comes with a higher price tag.

Issues Arising from Wearing Inappropriate Footwear

As with any type of footwear, issues like calluses, blisters, and even bunions can arise from wearing ill-fitting footwear. And while these irritations may seem minor, they can cause short- or even long-term discomfort if the footwear issue is not corrected and the condition not treated.

There are more serious side effects that can stem from wearing shoes not suited to your activity. So, choosing the appropriate, purpose-built footwear for the activity in question is critical in preventing injuries such as a sprained ankle, pain in your heel(s), shin splints, or even a bone fracture.

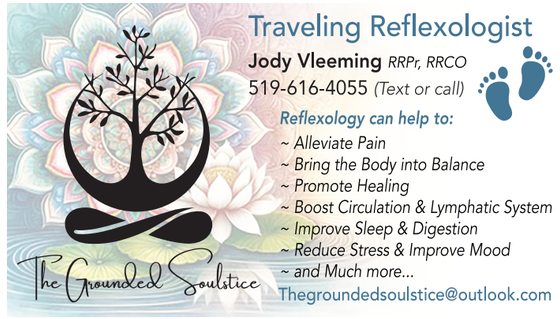
We’re happy to make recommendations for shoes that will suit both your feet and your intended activity. And of course, if you have suffered an injury due to ill-fitting or inappropriate footwear, treatment is recommended to avoid prolonging or exacerbating your pain. Contact us to inquire about our professional foot care services.

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USE YOUR CHARGING SUPERPOWERS

CHEAP CHARGER? DON'T CHANCE IT.

Use the cord and charger that came with your device or one approved by the manufacturer.

Why it matters: Using the wrong charger can damage the battery and increase the chance of fire. Cheap or off-brand chargers may not meet important safety standards.

SOFT SURFACE? HARD PASS.

Charge on a hard, flat surface like a table, desk, or bare floor.

Why it matters: Devices and chargers create heat during normal charging. Soft surfaces like beds, pillows, and couches can trap heat and block airflow, which can cause a battery to overheat.

FEELS HOT? STOP USING IT.

Stop using your device if it feels very hot, starts to swell, smells strange, leaks, smokes, or makes popping or hissing sounds.

Why it matters: A damaged battery can overheat and start a fire.

FULLY CHARGED? TIME TO UNPLUG.

Unplug your device when it is fully charged.

Why it matters: Leaving a device plugged in can increase heat and stress on the battery.

FOR TOOLS AND RIDES, CHARGE OUTSIDE.

Charge large items like e-bikes, scooters, and power tools outside when possible. Do not block exits when charging.

Why it matters: These batteries are larger and store more energy. Fires can grow quickly if the battery fails.

OUT OF SIGHT? NOT IN FLIGHT.

When on a plane, keep devices where you can see them while charging. Do not charge e-cigarettes or vapes on the plane. Tell a flight attendant if you notice a problem with your device, such as if it feels very hot, starts to swell, is smoking, or has a strange smell.

Why it matters: If a battery overheats or fails, it is important for the flight crew to be able to respond quickly.

— Working smoke alarms and a home fire escape plan can help make a life-saving difference. —

BATTERY SAFETY STARTS BEFORE YOU PLUG IN

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EMERGENCY CONTACT NUMBERS

Emergency (Fire/Medical/Police)
911

Waterloo Regional Police Non Emergency
519-570-9777

Crime Stoppers
1-800-222-8477

Ontario Poison Centre
1-800-268-9017

Ontario Problem Gambling Helpline
1-888-230-3505

TeleHealth
1-866-797-0000
TTY: 1-866-797-0007

Ontario Health atHome
1-833-515-1234

Suicide Crisis Helpline
Call or text 988

Retirement Homes Regulatory Authority
1-855-275-7472

Elder Abuse Response Team
519-579-4607

Interfaith Counselling Centre
519-662-3092

Hospice of Waterloo Region
519-743-4114

Alzheimer Society of Waterloo Wellington
519-742-1422

Senior Safety Line
1-866-299-1011

Township of Wilmot
519-634-8444

Township of Wellesley
519-699-4611

Township of Woolwich
519-699-1647

Region of Waterloo Public Health
519-575-4400

Ontario Caregiver Organization Helpline
1-833-416-2273

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Copies will be available around the first Wednesday of every month at the following locations:

WILMOT TOWNSHIP:

- MeMe's Café New Hamburg (outside magazine stand)
- Sobeys New Hamburg (outside magazine stand)
- HearingLife formerly Hemmerich Hearing
- Dolman Eyecare
- Morningside Retirement Community
- Stonecroft New Hamburg
- Nithview Community
- Foxboro Green
- Community Care Concepts
- Town Square Pharmacy
- Cooks Pharmacy
- New Hamburg Thrift Centre
- New Hamburg Legion
- New Hamburg Office Pro
- No Frills New Hamburg
- Baden Village Pharmacy
- Rudy Held Performance Centre
- Soles Journey New Hamburg
- Heart & Home Creations NH



- McDonalds (outside magazine stand)
- LifeLabs/UltraScran Plaza (outside magazine stand)

WELLESLEY TOWNSHIP:

- Schmidtsville Restaurant (outside magazine stand)
- Wellesley Township Community Health Centre
- Linwood Nurse Practitioner Office
- Pond View Retirement Village
- Cooks Pharmacy Wellesley
- Pym's Village Market
- In Season Home & Garden St Clements
- Len's Mill Store – St Jacobs
- Food Town IFT St Clements (Outside Magazine Stand)

WOOLWICH TOWNSHIP:

- Community Care Concepts
- Martin's Guardian Pharmacy (outside magazine stand)
- Kiwanis Transit
- Woolwich Health Care Centre
- MCC Thrift & Gift Elmira
- Living Waters Books & Toys Elmira
- Bonnie Lou's Cafe
- Hillcrest Home Baking
- Dollarama Elmira (outside magazine stand)
- Harvest Moon St. Jacob's

Solutions

7	6	5	4	9	2	1	3	8
3	9	4	8	5	1	2	7	6
2	1	8	3	6	7	9	5	4
6	5	2	9	1	4	7	8	3
4	3	9	2	7	8	6	1	5
1	8	7	5	3	6	4	9	2
5	2	3	7	4	9	8	6	1
8	7	6	1	2	5	3	4	9
9	4	1	6	8	3	5	2	7

Concentration Puzzle: Out of sight, out of mind.



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